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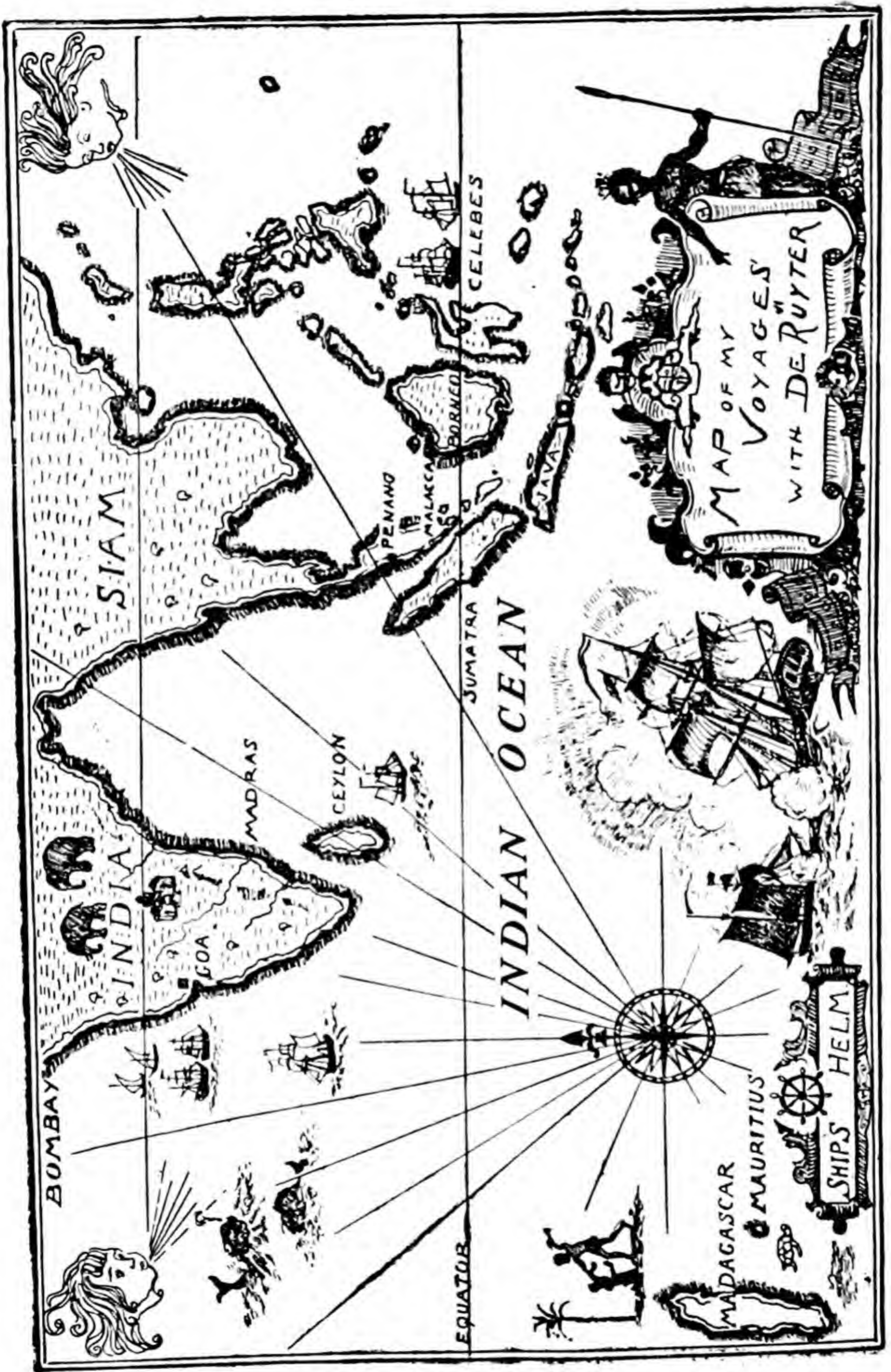
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*TALES RETOLD
FOR EASY READING*

First Series

SOME ADVENTURES
OF A YOUNGER SON

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BOMBAY

INDIA

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GOA

MADRAS

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PENANG

MALACCA

BORNEO

SUMATRA

CELEBES

INDIAN OCEAN

EQUATOR

MADAGASCAR

MAURITIUS

SHIPS HELM

MAP OF MY VOYAGES WITH DE RUYTER

112
TALES RETOLD FOR EASY READING

First Series

AL 016
**SOME ADVENTURES
OF A YOUNGER SON**

Adapted from
E. J. TRELAWNY

by
EGERTON SMITH

(249)



London

Oxford University Press

Geoffrey Cumberlege

Oxford University Press, Amen House, London, E.C.4

GLASGOW NEW YORK TORONTO MELBOURNE WELLINGTON
BOMBAY CALCUTTA MADRAS KARACHI CAPE TOWN IBADAN

Geoffrey Cumberlege, Publisher to the University

*Published 1937
Seventh impression 1956*



PRINTED IN GREAT BRITAIN BY HEADLEY BROTHERS LTD
109 KINGSWAY LONDON WC2 AND ASHFORD KENT
from plates

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NOTE.—*This story is taken from ‘The Adventures of a Younger Son’, a famous book by E. J. Trelawny, which was first published in 1831.*

CHAPTER I

MY SCHOOL-DAYS

I WAS born in the year 1791. My father had two sons, of whom I was the younger, and two daughters. He came of a good old family, and had been an officer in the army, but he was not wealthy. When he married he soon found that living in London cost too much money. So he decided to lead a quiet and simple life near a small town in the country. All this made him a severe man, unkind to his children, and unwilling to spend money on us.

My brother gave very little trouble to his parents, but I was not so easily managed. My father made hard rules for us, which I often disobeyed. We were ordered to walk only along the roads, but I went into the forest, or climbed the hills, or went down to the river to swim. When I was found out I was severely, and often cruelly, punished.

If they had shown me love or even some kindness, I too might have obeyed my parents willingly. But all that I could remember was punishment or cruelty.

So I soon hated all who checked me—first parents, and afterwards teachers.

My father said that he could not afford to send his children to a good school, and indeed he said that learning was not necessary for us if we were to become soldiers. So I was not sent to school



‘ HE AT ONCE COMMANDED US TO FOLLOW HIM ’

till I was nearly ten years old. I was then a big boy for my age. My father decided very suddenly to send us. It happened in this way.

One day I had climbed an apple-tree in the garden, against my father’s orders. When I was throwing the fruit down to my brother, my father came on us suddenly. His anger was terrible. He at once commanded us to follow him. Without entering the house again, he walked

quickly out of the garden and along the road to the town.

I am taken to school

When we had passed through the town to the farther side, he stopped outside a gate in a high wall. Here he rang a bell, and in a minute or two we were admitted to a courtyard. We saw before us an ugly building which looked like a prison. We knew at once that it was a school. The servant took us inside, and soon the headmaster appeared.

My father said, 'Sir, these two boys are my sons. Can you take them into your school?'

'Yes, sir,' replied the master. 'I am willing to take them.'

'They both behave badly,' said my father, 'as badly as any boys can behave. But the younger is the worse,' he continued, pointing to me. 'He does more wrong in a day than all your boys can do in a week. I have to punish him every day.'

The master looked me up and down, and said, 'You may safely leave him in my hands. I know how to deal with him.'

In a few minutes everything was arranged, and my father went away without saying another word to either of us.

We were sent out to the small playground. With its high walls it looked more like a prison courtyard. Thirty or forty boys, from five to

fifteen years old, stood round, looking at us, asking questions, and laughing unkindly at us. My school-days were all unhappy, but this first day was the unhappiest of all. At supper I could not eat my food, little as it was, and as soon as I was in bed in the darkness I gave way to my unhappiness and burst into tears.

My school life

My school life was a long story of suffering. Our teachers were cruel to us. So the big boys in their turn were cruel to the small boys. If any boy was good or kind, we laughed at him.

Soon I had no fear of punishment, for I was beaten so often that I became used to it. Before long I was the leader of the school in all games, both good and bad, and after two years I began to think of *revenge*¹ on the headmaster himself.

I determined to start on a young teacher who helped him. I chose a party of the most daring boys, and together we made a plan. Once a week all the boys took a long walk in the country, led by the young teacher. One day, during our walk, we stopped for a rest, and the teacher sat down. My party went at once into the woods to cut sticks. As soon as they were ready, I with three of the strongest boys suddenly attacked our enemy. We *seized*² his legs, arms and neck, and held him down on the ground. Then we shouted

¹ *revenge* *n.* = harm done to another person in return for harm done by him.

² *seize* *v.* = suddenly and firmly take hold of.

to our friends, who ran up with their sticks and beat him without mercy, as he had so often beaten us.

My revenge on the headmaster

The headmaster heard about all this from the teacher, and determined to give me the severest punishment that he could. He called me up to him before all the boys in the schoolroom, and struck me.

I had by this time lost all fear, and could think of nothing but revenge. I took him by the legs, and pulled with all my strength, so that he fell heavily on to the back of his head. Teachers and servants then came to his help, and I rushed out into the garden.

In a short time the teachers and servants came out and took me back into the house, and I was shut up alone in a small bedroom. At supper-time they brought me only bread and water. It was poor food, but not much worse than our ordinary food.

The next day, too, I was kept in that room, and was given only bread and water. I saw no one but a servant. At night a small bit of candle was given to me. Soon after the servant had lit the candle and had gone away I set fire to the bed-clothes with it. I do not know why I did it. Perhaps it was in the hope of escape.

Soon the bed-clothes were all in flames, and the wood of the bed was beginning to burn. The

smoke was rising in clouds, so that I could hardly breathe, but I did not care. As I was watching the flames with delight, the servant returned to take the candle away. I cried out to him, 'Look, George ; it was so cold that I lit a fire.' The man called the other servants, and, as there was little else but a chair in the room, the fire was soon put out.

I was taken to another room, and a man remained all night to watch me. The next day I was sent home to my father.

CHAPTER II

LIFE IN THE NAVY

I go to sea

My father kept me at home till I was fourteen. Then he sent me to sea as a *midshipman*¹ in the *navy*.² At that time England was at war with France, and I took part in several fights at sea.

I was with a fine set of boys of my own age. The life was rough and hard, but no worse than my life at school, and far more interesting than my life at home. So I began to like it.

When the war came to an end, life on a warship was not so exciting, and I did not like it so well. In the navy there are always many rules to be obeyed. In time of war we did not mind that ; but when there was peace we had much less to do, and more time in which to notice that some of the officers were very severe on the men and boys under them.

I still loved the sea, however, and I learnt all that I could about ships and how to sail them. Luckily I began to have a great love of reading.

¹ midshipman *n.* = a young officer learning his duties on a warship.

² navy *n.* = a country's ships of war.

I borrowed and bought books, and read them whenever I could. Stories of travel were what I chiefly loved.

On my third voyage the captain's clerk came to me one day and said, 'I see that you have a number of books, but you have no good place to keep them. Let me take care of them for you. You may put them in my *cabin*¹ and sit there to read them whenever you like.'

His chief reason was that they would look well in his cabin, for he himself never read books. But I was a simple fool and thought his offer very kind. A few days later, however, I went to the cabin to take a book to read outside on the *deck*.² He turned to me angrily, and said, 'You may read here if you like ; but I will not allow you to take any books out of my cabin.'

'Are they not mine ?' I asked.

'Not now,' he replied.

Upon this I said, 'Give me my books. I will leave them here no longer.'

'Do not dare to touch one,' he cried. But I jumped across the cabin and seized one of my books. He struck me, and I returned the blow. He was more than twenty years old, big and strong. I was a boy of fourteen. My courage in returning his blow so surprised him that for a moment he did nothing. Some of my friends

¹ cabin *n.* = a private room in a ship.

² deck *n.* = one of the floors of a ship ; *on deck* generally refers to an upper floor, open to the air.

had gathered round the door and cried out, 'Well done.' This made him very angry.

'I will soon tame you,' he cried, and gave me a blow with a heavy ruler. He continued to beat me without mercy until he broke the ruler over my head. My head, mouth, and nose were badly hurt, and I was mad with pain. Then suddenly I saw on the table a small knife.

I thought of nothing but revenge. I seized the knife, ran at him suddenly, and struck him in several places. He shut his eyes, held his hands up to his face, and begged me to spare him. At last I threw down the knife, took up the book, and walked out of the cabin.

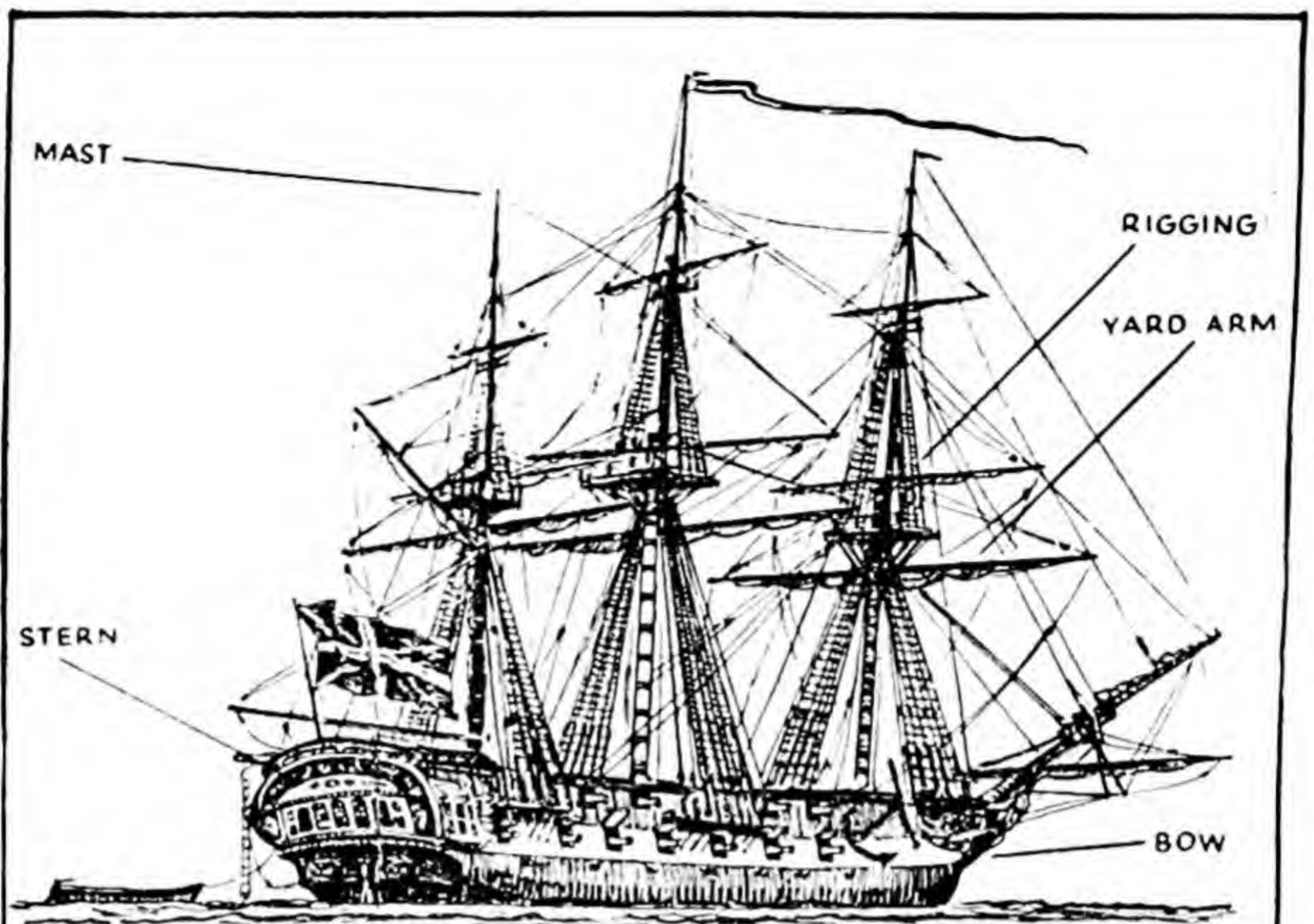
Soon an officer took me to the captain.

'This midshipman, sir,' he said, 'has killed your clerk with a knife.'

Without asking any questions, the captain exclaimed, 'He has killed my clerk ! Tie him up, and imprison him below.'

I tried to explain what had happened, but he stopped me at once, saying, 'Silence ! Take him down below, quickly.'

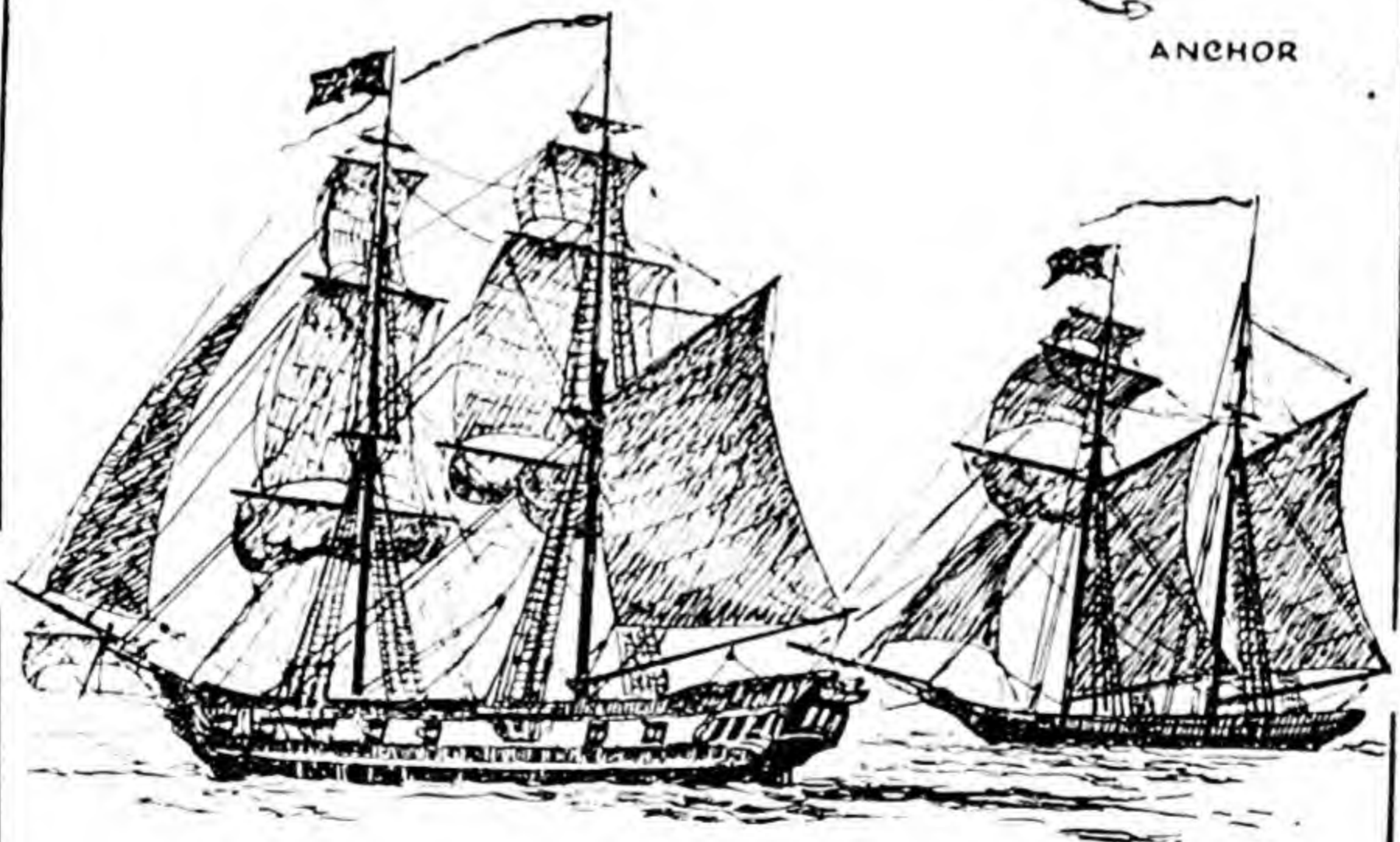
Before I had actually been tied up, however, the captain changed his orders ; for he had heard a different account of the affair from a friendly officer. But I was ordered never to show myself on deck. So the rest of the voyage was a holiday for me. I got my books, and by much reading made up a little for my want of education.



FRIGATE



ANCHOR



BRIG

SCHOONER

A voyage to India

At the end of this voyage I found that my father was still determined to keep me at sea, and would not allow me to visit my home even for one day, or to see my mother, my brother, or my sisters. So I went to sea again, feeling that no one cared for me at all.

My next voyage was in another ship. We were away for a year and a half, and I learnt a great deal about the different countries of the world, and about the art of sailing.

After that I joined a ship which was leaving for India. During this voyage I became friendly with a young officer named Aston. I was always with him when it was his turn to keep *watch*.¹ We talked together a great deal during the long nights, and he discovered my real character. He found that my nature was not as bad as it had seemed to be, for his kindness made me show the best of myself.

On the other hand the second officer, who was a Scotsman, took an evil delight in being unjust and cruel to all those under his command. One day he came up to me on deck to ask a question. I *saluted*² him in the regular way by putting my hand to the front of my hat ; but he said to me, 'Take your hat off, sir, when you address me.'

I replied, 'I have saluted you in the correct way, as I do the captain.'

¹ to keep watch = to take a turn of duty on deck.

² salute *v.* = move the hand to the head to show respect.

‘Take off your hat, sir,’ he shouted at me again.

‘I will not,’ I answered. ‘I will take it off to no one but God or the King.’

He could not say anything to the captain about this, for he was wrong, and I was right. So in revenge he began to make my life as hard as he could.

He sometimes punished me by sending me up the *mast* for four hours. I soon found out a way of making him angry. I used to choose a place where, safely supported by the *rigging*, I could lie down along a yard-arm and pretend to fall asleep.

This made him afraid of my falling ; for if I had fallen to the deck and broken an arm or a leg, the captain would have been angry. He would also have asked why I had been punished. This was what I had intended.

One day there was a very rough sea. Being especially angry, the second officer ordered me to go out to the very end of the *yard-arm* and remain there. I went up, but even there I managed to lie down, secretly supporting myself with some ropes, and pretended to fall asleep.

The Scotsman now began to fear that he had gone too far in his cruelty. He shouted up to me, telling me to keep awake or I should fall into the sea. His fear suggested to me a plan of revenge and a way of putting an end to this sort of cruelty.

I could swim as well as anyone on the ship, and I determined to drop into the sea. The ship was rolling heavily from side to side, so that every minute the end of the yard-arm seemed almost to touch the water. I waited till it was at its lowest over the sea, and then I dropped on to the top of a great wave.

Down into the water I sank, lower and still lower. I thought that I should never stop going down. At last, however, I began to rise, and swam wildly upwards. I felt as if I should burst with trying to hold my breath.

I do not remember coming to the top. In fact I knew nothing more till I found myself lying on the deck of the ship. Aston was bending over me, saying, 'How are you now?' I suffered more than I had expected, for I had great pains in my head for two or three days ; but I had won my fight, and so I was satisfied. The captain spoke very severely to the second officer, and I was never again sent to the mast-head.

Best of men

30th June

CHAPTER III

I MAKE A NEW FRIEND

I meet De Witt

WHEN we reached Bombay I was one of the first to go on shore. I might have lived on the ship for nothing. But I now hated it so much that I rented a room in the town for as long as we stayed there.

At one of the eating-houses I met a man who called himself De Witt. We took our meals together, and at night walked about the town together several times. We soon became very friendly. He was a fine man, tall and strong. He could speak many languages, and seemed to know all about India and the Indian seas. So he was a very interesting man to know, and I soon began to admire him very much ; and he seemed to like me.

I supposed him to be a merchant, for he had mentioned to me that he was shortly going on a voyage. Some of the richest Indian merchants of Bombay knew him well and were delighted to meet him ; although he did not seem to meet the officials of the *East India Company*.¹ He was

¹ The East India Company was an English Company formed in 1600 for trading with India.

always especially pleased to be in the company of officers of the navy, and he talked to many of my friends. He took a great interest in their ships, asking how fast they could sail, how many guns they had, how big they were, what kind of men their captains were, and where they would be going next. As he seemed to like listening better than talking, they all liked him, and talked to him freely.

He often took me with him as he went about Bombay at night, although I did not know the language well enough to understand what his business was with the Indian merchants. One day we borrowed horses and rode a few miles out of the town to a pretty little house which he owned in the country. I was proud to be his friend, and soon began to tell him all my thoughts. I told him of the injustice and cruelty which I had suffered. I said that I loved the sea, but that I would not remain in the navy. 'What I want is to be free,' I cried.

He advised me to keep cool and think well before I took any serious step. 'You have suffered much from two or three unjust men,' he said. 'All are not like that.' But I was determined to leave the navy.

I sail with De Witt

So De Witt took me to his little house in the country where I stayed quietly, enjoying the peaceful life and the simple food.

The ship waited one day while the officers searched for me. But then she sailed away, and I was safe.

We were very happy, and stayed there two more days, hunting or resting. Then we rode back to Bombay.

Before we left De Witt said to me, 'In a few days I am going to sea. What do you intend to do?'

'I have not yet thought about it,' I answered. 'I have enjoyed this sort of quiet life here.'

He smiled and said, 'Well, my dear fellow, you may continue to enjoy it, if you wish ; for I will lend you the house. The cow will give you milk. There is maize and fruit in the garden. What you cannot eat, you can sell to buy other food ; and there are plenty of birds that you can shoot.'

'Yes,' I said, 'I should be quite happy.'

'Perhaps you would, for a short time,' he continued. 'But I did not tell you that, besides a house, I have a fine little ship, fast and well armed, ready for peace or war. I only want a good officer for her.'

'Where is she, De Witt?' I cried, forgetting all about the peaceful country life. 'Why did you not tell me? How big is she? How many men does she carry? Let us go and look at her.'

A few days after we had reached Bombay De Witt took me on board his ship. She was an Arab *brig*, and her *crew*¹ were mostly Arabs.

¹ *crew* *n.* = the company of sailors who work a ship.

De Witt himself did not often go on board when she was in harbour, and then only very secretly ; but there was a captain of the Arab crew, called the Rais, who often visited him on shore. There were several European seamen, from various countries ; but De Witt said I must not mention these men when I was on shore.

‘ Now you have seen the brig,’ said De Witt, ‘ how would you like to sail in her ? Will you take her down the coast for me to *Goa* ?’ I have to take back another small ship to her owner there. If you would like to make the voyage you must go on board when the sun sets and sail as soon as the wind blows off the land. She is all ready for sea. I have told the Rais that you are going and that you will give him his orders. But do not say a word to anyone. We must start separately, but when we are out at sea I will tell you everything. Are you satisfied ?’

‘ I am quite satisfied,’ I replied. ‘ I have every trust in you. Where you go, I will follow.’

‘ Very well,’ he said. ‘ I know you have courage and are true to your friends. All you must do now is to gain wisdom too, and learn to control yourself.’

Then he gave me a paper with notes of the *course*² I was to follow and where we should meet, and so we parted.

¹ *Goa n.* = a sea-port south of Bombay.

² *course n.* = way, direction towards a place.

De Ruyter's story

At sunset I went on to the brig. The Rais, who spoke English very well, received me and took me to the cabin. After I had eaten supper I walked round the deck several times so that I should know my way about even in the darkness. Then I sat down and began to think of De Witt.

I had often wondered what he was. It was clear that he was not at all like the ordinary merchants of Bombay. There was something strange about him. I thought that perhaps the brig was a private ship of war. The English had several such ships at that time, carrying letters from the King allowing them to attack merchant ships of the enemy. They had not any of these, however, in the Indian Seas. If De Witt sailed in the same way under the French flag, what was he doing in an English port where he had many friends? I felt sure that he was not what he seemed, just a merchant. Whatever he was, I was ready to trust myself to him as my leader.

Towards the middle of the night the wind rose, and we pulled up the anchor. According to my orders I sailed right out to sea before turning south. So even if De Witt had set off at the same time, no one who observed us would have thought that we were going together.

When day broke I sailed closer to the shore and soon met the other ship. De Witt came across to the brig in a small boat, and we had breakfast together.

As we ate he told me more about himself.

‘When I am in Bombay,’ he said, ‘I call myself De Witt, and I do business as a merchant, selling what I have brought in the brig. My real name, however, is De Ruyter ; and when I am at sea I have to be ready for fighting as well as trading.

‘Years ago I began to trade for myself ; but the East India Company wanted to have all the trade for themselves. They demanded a share of the profit on every *cargo*,¹ especially of tea and *spices*.² I thought that they were not just in claiming this. Authority to do so had been given to them by their government, but what right had the government to do that ? When I refused they seized my ship and its cargo, and left me with nothing but my clothes.

‘You can understand my feelings. Do you wonder that I thought of nothing but revenge ? I am as proud as you are. I would not give in, but determined to give blow for blow.

‘As I had no money, I entered the service of the Rajah of Mysore for a time. He was fighting against the armies of the Company. Then with money that I had saved and some more that I borrowed, I bought a brig and fitted it out with guns.

‘Now, wherever and whenever I can, I attack

¹ cargo *n.* = the goods carried by a ship for trade.

² spices *n.* (pl.) = nuts and fruits of various kinds, added to food to give it a strong taste.

the Company's ships and take their cargoes. The cargo you saw unloaded at Bombay the other day was taken from one of their ships. They have some fighting ships of their own which are used to protect their cargo ships from the Malay pirates. But this ship had a lazy captain who had not kept close to the others.

'You may perhaps say that I am no better than a pirate. But I think it is not wrong to rob those who have robbed me and are still robbing others. I have letters from the government of France giving me authority to sail under the French flag and attack the merchant ships of their enemies. In return for that, though I do not like them, I often do them some small services.

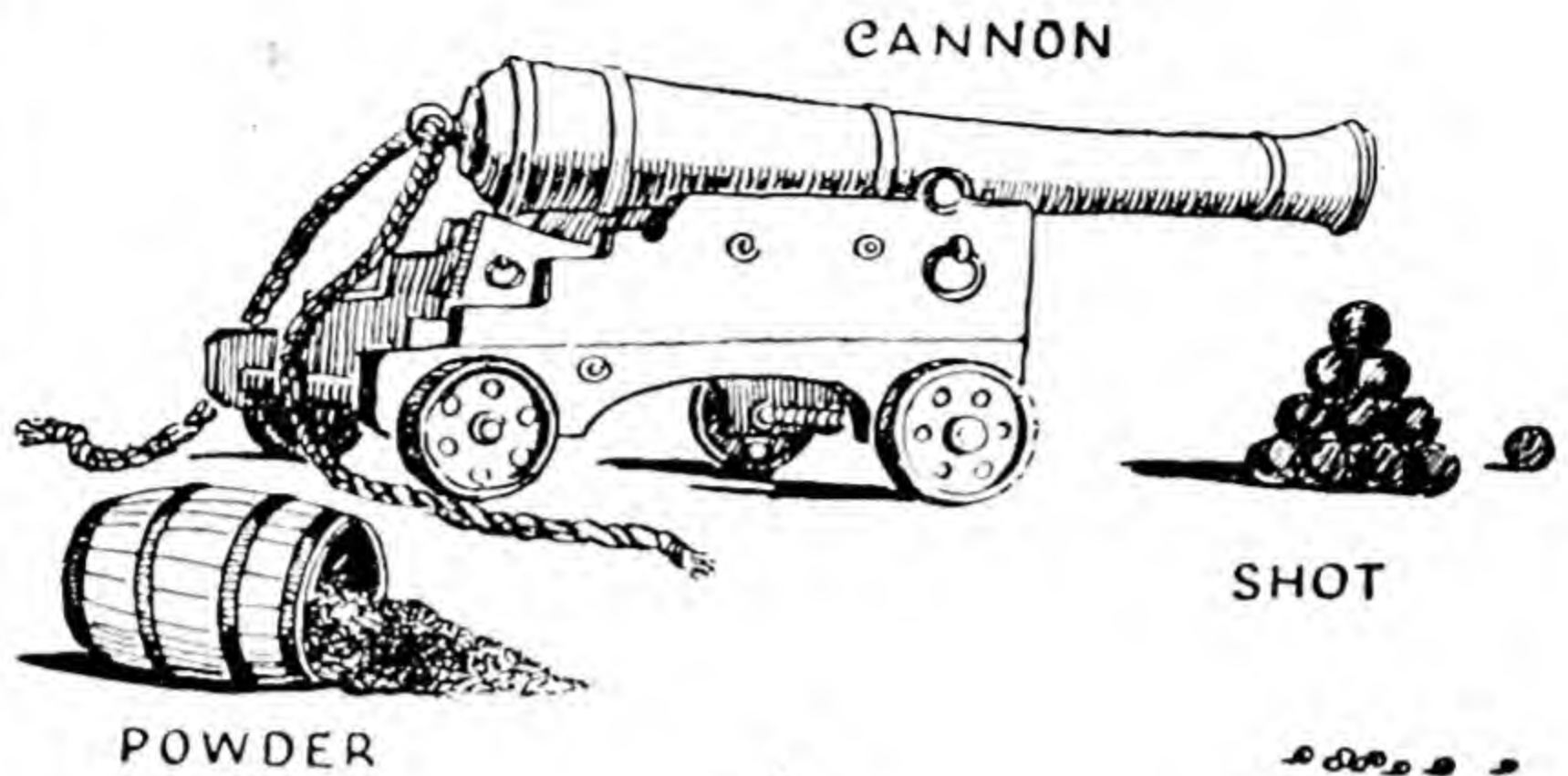
'I am in danger, of course ; but they do not know that De Witt is really De Ruyter. I do not go very often to the big towns like Bombay, Calcutta, or Madras (where I had been robbed of my profits). I never go to the Company's offices or store-houses. My visit to Bombay was for a more important object than selling the cargo of the brig. It was to discover the movements of the Company's ships.

'Now you can make your choice,' he continued. 'If you would like to stay with me you will be very welcome. But mine is a rough life, and dangerous. My trade is not a lawful one. I may consider myself in the right ; others do not. Lastly, I fight under the flag of a country

which is an enemy of yours. On the other hand, if you would like work on land, I have friends who for my sake will gladly employ you.'

'I shall stay with you,' I cried. 'I have said that before, and now I say it again.'

So I joined myself to a wonderful man, who always remained a true and noble friend.



POWDER

SHOT



BULLETS



MUSKET



PISTOL



KRIS



SWORD



COMPASS



SPEAR

MSH 4054

CHAPTER IV

ADVENTURES WITH DE RUYTER

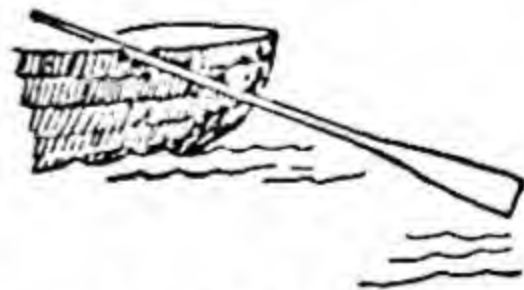
The escape from Goa

ON the morning of the fourth day I dropped anchor in the harbour of Goa. I sent the Rais on shore with the brig's papers, and a letter which De Ruyter had given me for a merchant there. In the evening De Ruyter brought his ship in, and at night he came over in a boat to the brig, to give me his orders. The next day he went on a secret journey ashore.

I had given up my English clothing and dressed myself like an Arab. I had loose trousers, a brightly coloured shirt, a cap of black sheepskin and a long piece of silk cloth wound round my middle like a broad belt, with a *kris* or long Malayan knife stuck in it. My hair was black, and my face, neck and arms had been burnt brown by the sun. So I could have passed anywhere as an Arab, if I could have spoken the language well enough.

On two or three nights afterwards De Ruyter went on shore again to meet someone.

The *oars* of his boat had pieces of cloth tied



round them, so that they should not be heard easily.

I always feared that De Ruyter might be discovered one night. So I determined to have everything ready to help his escape, if he were followed to the brig. Our boats were taken on board, and part of the crew was kept on watch, just as if we were at sea.

On the fourth night, long before it was the time for De Ruyter's return, I heard sudden shouts near the harbour. Lights appeared, and there was the noise of oars being used.

As I looked carefully over the water I could see something moving. I could just hear the sound of oars meeting the water. But, as the oars made no other sound, I knew that they belonged to our boat.

I ordered the men on watch to awake all the crew, and set them to getting the sails ready. I then found an *axe*, and waited near the anchor-rope. When the boat came nearer, the men rowing at great speed, I called to her. A reply came back at once in a low but clear voice from De Ruyter, telling me to move off at once.



I lifted my axe and cut the anchor-rope. As soon as the boat touched the brig I ordered the sails to be set, and myself ran to the helm.

De Ruyter climbed on board, followed by his

men after they had tied up their boat. He came at once to me and said, 'Well done, my boy! You did right to cut the rope and not waste time in pulling up the anchor. Go now and get spears for yourself and the men. I was followed by two boats. Let no one come on board. If any man tries to climb up, spear him at once. But do not use *muskets* or *pistols*. They make too much noise. I do not want them to see me. If they ask for De Witt, the merchant, say you do not know him.'

I at once sent some men to bring up spears, and at that moment one of the boats arrived. Its officer commanded me to stop the ship as he wanted to see the captain.

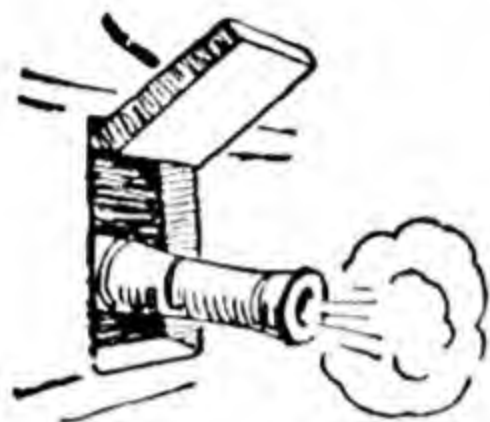
I replied, 'I am moving out to sea at once. My ship's papers have all been examined and signed. I cannot lose this wind. What do you want?'

'Stop, or we shall shoot,' cried the officer in the boat.

Most of our men were up the masts, setting the sails. Some, however, were on deck, taking their spears. I ordered these to protect themselves behind the sides of the ship. As I did this, a *bullet* flew past my head and struck the mast behind me. I had a pistol in my belt, but I remembered De Ruyter's order and did not use it. Several musket-shots were fired from both boats. But our men were protected by the side of the ship, and no harm was done.

The first boat had now reached us and the men were climbing up. We attacked them with spears, however, and they fell back into their boat with cries of pain. The officer commanded others to climb up, but they refused.

Then I noticed that the other boat had reached the other side of the ship. So I ran back there with a few men. We pulled one of our small *cannon* to an open port-hole, and aimed it down at the boat.



‘Stop rowing,’ I cried, ‘or I shall blow you to pieces.’

They obeyed at once. By this time all our sails were set and filled with wind, and we were moving rapidly away. Soon the boats were left far behind, and by the light of the rising moon we saw them turn and row towards the town.

De Ruyter called me to him and said, ‘Well done, my boy! Your quickness has saved us. What was it that made you have everything ready to start, even before I shouted to you?’

I told him how I had seen lights and heard sounds that I had not seen and heard on other nights, and feared that all was not well.

‘Well,’ he said, ‘I knew I should be able to trust you as soon as you had gained experience. Young as you are, you have learnt to be more watchful and ready than most old men are. I

should hardly have escaped if you had not been prepared.'

With these words in my ears I went happily below to sleep. It was not often that anyone had said ' Well done ! ' to me. De Ruyter had opened a new life for me.

CHAPTER V

ADVENTURE WITH AN ENGLISH WARSHIP

Followed by a frigate

WE set our course south, but made very slow progress. The wind frequently dropped, and we lay still for hours at a time. No one, however, was impatient. The Arabs were content to sit and tell tales. The Europeans all had important work in the ship. They had duties to carry out every day, and these gave them plenty to do.

Some days after we had left the islands, the man who was on watch called out 'A sail to the west!' and soon afterwards, 'Another!' Rain began to fall, however, and prevented us from seeing any more of them for a few hours.

When the rain had stopped and the sky had cleared in the evening, we found ourselves much closer to them, and I could see that they were ships of war. I went to the cabin and told De Ruyter that they were frigates—perhaps French.

He came up with me on deck, and after looking carefully said, 'They are frigates, but English, I think, not French.'

We changed our course. So did the frigates. We hoped to escape from them during the night by changing our course ; but the wind was so light that we made very little way. In the morning we found the frigates still less than ten miles behind us. As we sailed on, one of the frigates gained on us a little. She sailed so well that De Ruyter thought that she must be a new ship, fresh from Europe. Two hours later, however, the wind dropped, and the sea became as smooth as glass.

The sun shone down with terrible heat. After a short time the frigate let down her boats, and in spite of the distance and the great heat, they came on, intending to board us.

‘ They are tiring their men and wasting time,’ said De Ruyter. ‘ Before noon the wind will rise again, and the frigate will have to stop to take in her boats, by which they will lose time.’

As he expected, before the boats had come half the distance between us, the wind began to fill our sails, and we were off again.

The leading frigate made *signals*¹ to the slower one. De Ruyter had a book which contained the signals used in the navy ; and by the help of this he read the signals. She was telling the other frigate to change her course and sail for Mauritius, or the Isle of France, as it was then called.

When night came on we were nearing an island which De Ruyter knew well. He hoped that the frigate’s captain would think we should go

¹ signal *n.* = message sent by signs.

straight on in the direction of the wind. Instead of doing that he turned quickly off the course, worked round the island, and dropped anchor at the other side.

At the first light of day, we were all surprised to see the frigate, also at anchor, only three miles away from us. De Ruyter's quick eye, however, had seen her before anyone on the frigate had seen us. We were at once under sail again, and had a good start. She followed us quickly, but the wind was so light that we gained a little more distance, as the brig was not so heavy as the frigate.

Then the wind began to drop. It had, however, done all that De Ruyter wanted. It had taken us to a place where the frigate, several times larger than the brig, could not follow.

De Ruyter had given up hope of escape from the frigate. But he still had a plan. He was going to fight ; but he was able to choose his own position, where the frigate's cannon could not give her the advantage over us.

He showed me in front of us a long line of rocks running out from the coast of the island. They made a half-circle, with a small opening in the middle. Inside was a bay of smooth water, with a sandy shore. Outside for more than half a mile sharp rocks showed their heads everywhere.

' You see,' he said, ' there is a passage by which no ship wider than ours can enter, even in smooth water. In a wind, however light, no ship would come within a mile of these rocks.'

‘ In the open sea we cannot fight even one frigate ; her fifty cannon would destroy us in an hour. If the frigate could put herself alongside, our men would have no chance against three or four times their numbers. Helped by our oars we can work our way through that passage. Their boats can follow us ; but we can fight against them, and we shall do so.’

Attacked by the boats

We began to move slowly to the position he had pointed out. Then we dropped anchor, and sent men in boats to tie ropes to the rocks. Long before this had been done the wind had died away altogether. The frigate’s captain had lowered seven boats, which set off to follow and attack us. They could come much more rapidly between the rocks than we could, but they were still some distance away.

This gave us time to complete our arrangements. Powder and shot were brought up for the cannon ; muskets and spears were given out to the men. Our crew numbered fifty-four who were fit to carry arms. Some of them had never yet seen a battle. I was in the *bows* of the ship with the Europeans. De Ruyter was to stay at the *stern* with the Arabs, who, of course, he could handle much better than I could.

As soon as the first of the English boats turned into the bay the men shouted ‘ Hurrah ! ’ and

each boat followed in turn. De Ruyter called upon his Arabs to reply with their war-cry, and they did so with great spirit.

Each boat had a Union Jack flying, while we had the French flag at our mast-head. The Englishmen were armed with muskets as well as swords, and several of the larger boats had a small cannon.

De Ruyter called out to me, 'See whether that first boat is within range of our guns.'

I was quite ready and fired. My shot was straight, but went over their heads. We had, however, found our range, and now kept up a steady fire from our guns in the bows.

One of their boats was struck and began to go down. The men merely shouted 'Hurrah!' as if they were in a game, and another boat stopped to pick them up. Again a boat was hit, and another picked up the men. The others, however, came on rapidly, firing cannon and muskets, which did much harm on our deck. They never thought of turning back, although our fire had caused much heavier losses than they had expected. They came on with great courage until they were all alongside our brig.

We now took up our muskets and spears to drive back the small parties who were climbing on board in different places. If we stopped them in one place, they tried again in another, and at last many of them succeeded in getting on to our deck.



' AT LAST MANY OF THEM SUCCEEDED IN GETTING ON TO OUR DECK '

De Ruyter had feared that some of his un-trying Bombay sailors might try to run below. I saw one trying to do so. I knew how quickly this evil example might be followed. So I was firing my pistol at him to stop this at all costs, when I received a cut on my body from a sword. At the same time a pistol was pushed into my mouth with such force as to cut my lips. Luckily it did not go off, perhaps because the powder was wet.

While this was happening De Ruyter had gathered his Arabs again, and running forward in a body, they rushed the English from the deck into their boats or into the sea. Many were severely hurt, but they fought bravely, and some tried to climb up again.

Those who succeeded in getting on to the deck again were soon conquered. They had no hope of saving themselves, but I heard these men saying that they would never give themselves up to Arabs. Some others who still remained on board said the same. I understood what they felt. So I pushed through the Arabs and called out to them in English, 'Come, now, you fellows, give up your swords. They are of no use to you now. You shall have a good glass of *rum*¹ instead, which will be much better.'

'That is true enough,' they said, and were glad to give up their swords to me. Several others who were wounded did the same.

¹ *rum n.* = a strong drink (made from sugar cane) much loved by sailors.

Aston again

All this time a wind had been rising, and the waves had thrown two of the boats with such force against the side of the brig that they had been broken in. De Ruyter sent down parties of men to seize two of the unharmed boats. Two others were filled by men whom we had driven off the ship.

There still remained a few of the enemy on deck. One of these was an officer. Noticing that his boat had been seized, he seemed determined to make a last effort. He cut his way through the Arabs towards De Ruyter. De Ruyter saw his purpose and called out to his men to stand back.

‘Let the officer pass,’ he cried, ‘but alone.’

Hearing this I looked round. I thought the officer was going to the commander to give up his sword. But instead I saw him attack De Ruyter with all his strength. It was, however, useless. De Ruyter was a clever swordsman, and kept off the attack with ease. When the officer stopped for a moment to take breath, he did not attack him in turn, but said,

‘Come, sir, you have done everything you can. You can do no more, and it is too hot to go on fighting. You will see that you are among old friends here. Throw down your sword. It is useless.’

The officer turned his head and I saw his face. ‘It is Aston,’ I cried.

He looked round at my cry. At first he did not know me, for I was covered with blood and powder. Then he threw down his sword and said, 'Ha ! I see it all. You, and the well-known De Ruyter, who was De Witt, the Bombay merchant.'

'That is strange,' he went on, as he looked at me sadly. 'With two such men to lead a crew, what chance had we? And to attempt to take your brig in such a position was foolish.'

Seeing that so many of their party had given themselves up, the sailors in the two boats pushed off in order to escape.

'Let them go,' said De Ruyter. 'I do not want boats or prisoners. But it is my duty to keep those that I have.'

Then he turned to me, saying, 'Take your friend below to the cabin, and make him welcome. I have much to do on deck. But what is the matter? You said your *wound*¹ was only slight.'

As he said this I fell suddenly to the deck, weak with loss of blood. They carried me down into the cabin. There they took off my shirt, which was red with blood, and found two other wounds. One was in my side, the other in my arm. In the excitement of fighting I had hardly noticed these.

I soon felt better, and I found Aston dropping water over my face and head. In a short

¹ wound *n.* and *v.* = hurt.

time I was able to talk, and Aston said, 'I am sorry to find you fighting under the French flag.'

I replied, 'You will admit that I had no cause to be happy when I was serving under the flag of my own country. Can you show me a finer or nobler man than De Ruyter? If you can, I will change. But there is no one.'

'He is well known to be a fine, brave fellow,' Aston admitted. 'But that is not the point.'

'Well, Aston,' I said, 'you know all that happened. What would you have done in my place?'

He thought for a moment. Then he took my hand and said kindly, 'I think I should have done the same.'

Aston then told me how he had been able to change to the new frigate. The captain was one of his friends, and had got him appointed before he left England.

'We had received news that De Ruyter was out in his brig,' he continued, 'and were ordered to cut him off as he made for port. But we did not know that this was his brig. We thought she was a native *pirate*.¹ I thought I had seen her somewhere, but forgot that it was at Bombay. Besides I did not know that she was De Ruyter's, or even De Witt's, and I did not know that De Witt was De Ruyter. He has done more harm to the Company's trade than all the French

¹ pirate *n.* = sea-robber, and ship used by him.

warships put together. It is wonderful that he has so long escaped.'

De Ruyter soon came down again to the cabin. He first did all that he could for my comfort. Then he said to Aston, 'You have fallen into my hands, but that will be no great evil for you, and I have no wish to use your men hardly. Your frigate will, I know, come as near as she can in the morning, when the wind rises again, and you may then send back those men who are very badly wounded. They will receive better care on their own ship, for we are crowded here.' Aston thanked him, and accordingly wrote a report for his captain.

The next morning, as De Ruyter had expected, the frigate came as near as she dared. We put up a white flag in our largest boat, and sent across the wounded sailors along with Aston's letter. Aston and twenty-six of his men remained as our prisoners.

The captain returned his thanks, and admitted that De Ruyter had behaved like a gentleman, but said that all the same it was his duty to lay hands on him if he could.

De Ruyter knew that for the present he was in no danger. The frigate could come no nearer, because of the dangerous rocks, and we were out of range of her guns. She had lost five of her boats, as well as a number of her men. So she could not make another attempt to board

us, even if the captain were so foolish as to order it again, in face of her heavy losses.

All that they could do was to wait opposite the entrance to prevent our escape. As storms were frequent at that time of the year De Ruyter did not think that the ship could safely do that for long. So he had little fear.

On the third night after the attack, there were heavy showers of rain. From a distance we could not be seen or heard. Using the ropes we had tied to rocks, we pulled ourselves through the entrance. Then two of our boats went in front with ropes, and directed us safely between the rocks.

At first we used our oars, but we were soon able to sail, as the wind was blowing from the land. By one o'clock we were under full sail away from the island, while the frigate still knew nothing of our escape, and we set our course southward again for Mauritius.



CHAPTER VI

ATTACK ON A PIRATE TOWN

We help the French

DE RUYTER was willing to set Aston free, as he had been my friend. Aston, however, said, 'No ! the English attack failed, and I am quite rightly your prisoner. If you had lost the fight and had become my prisoner, I, as an English naval officer, should not have had the power to set you free. So you must remain loyal to France and keep me as a prisoner. I know it cannot be for long, for the English have many French prisoners in India, and an exchange can soon be arranged.'

'I owe no loyalty to the French,' replied De Ruyter, 'any longer than I wish. It is only a business arrangement. I am useful to them, and they are useful to me. The French at Port Louis hate the English because they fear them. But I have power enough to make sure that you are well used.'

So our voyage proceeded peacefully and happily enough. Our only trouble was that we had hardly enough room for our twenty-six prisoners

One day nearly three weeks later we saw a sail to the westward. As she came nearer De Ruyter could tell that she was a small French warship, larger than our brig, but not as big as a frigate. He sent signals to her, to which she replied. We took in sail to allow her to come up to us, and De Ruyter went across to her in a boat.

He remained talking for a long time with the French captain ; and on his return he sent nearly all our prisoners across to the French ship, where there was more room for them. Four of them, at their own request, were allowed to remain with Aston on the brig.

Then De Ruyter changed our course to north-west for the island of Madagascar. He told us that the French ship had been sent from Port Louis in Mauritius to punish a daring tribe of pirates, called the Maratti, who lived in a town at the north end of the island.

De Ruyter knew the place and gladly gave his information to the French captain. At first he would not promise to help him to punish the pirates until an inquiry had been made. It was true that some French traders had been attacked and killed. But had they given cause for the attack ?

The captain said that he himself had met several ships which had been robbed by the Maratti. So De Ruyter agreed that he would at least go on and help to make inquiries. Two

days later, however, we met some Arab traders. They had been robbed of their cargo, and all the young men of their crew had been taken to be sold as slaves. Only a few old men were left to work the ship, with a little food and water. This had been done by eighteen Maratti sailing-boats, each carrying from twenty to forty men. The boats were going on to attack some islands on the African coast.

This made De Ruyter decide to help the French captain against the pirates. At first he had thought that the Maratti were too powerful to be attacked by so small a force as ours. But now that so many of them were away he advised that we should land at night, make a surprise attack at daybreak, set free their prisoners, and destroy their town by fire.

Two days later, just before sunset, we dropped anchor to the east of a rocky cape which hid us from the town. It was a cloudy night, with frequent showers of rain. We got out our boats and landed a hundred and twenty officers and men, well armed. There were eighty from the French ship and forty from our brig. At the request of the French captain, De Ruyter took command of all.

De Ruyter divided his men into three parties. He himself took fifty, a French officer had thirty-five, and I had the same number. About half of mine were Arabs, armed with spears as well as muskets.

The attack on the town

Our plan was to enter the town at three different points. We were to get as near as we could without being discovered, and remain hidden. Then the leaders, under cover of the darkness, were to observe carefully where we could best force a way into the town. It had low mud walls round it, in which were three gates.

Just before day broke a signal would be given for all to attack at once. After getting inside the walls we were to seize the entrance gates, and leave small parties to hold them. The rest of us were then to make our way towards the centre of the town, killing all who stood out against us, but doing no harm to women or children.

I led my party up a small hill from the other side of which we could come down on to the town from behind. I left my party in hiding a little distance away, and I myself went forward very carefully to examine the ground, and find where to enter the town.

I soon found out that the wall was not very high, and was broken in several places. It was raining and the night was still dark, so I was able to bring ten of my men forward and hide them close under the wall.

We had to wait for some time, but at last, just as day was beginning to break, we heard the signal at the other side of the town. I and

my ten men easily got inside and surprised four or five of the Maratti who had been lying down at the gate.

The rest of my party came down without delay. Some were left, according to our orders, to guard the gateway ; and the others then advanced with me. The Maratti came rushing out of their *huts*¹ in twos and threes and threw themselves upon us. Most of these we killed with our spears. Whenever we saw a number of them collecting to attack us, we fired our muskets.

We soon reached a large building in the middle of the town, with an open space around it. There we stopped. A few minutes later the French officer arrived with his party, and then De Ruyter.

‘ Well done, my boy,’ he cried, ‘ always first in danger ! ’

There was loud shouting on all sides, but above all this noise we could hear the sound of shots from the gates. These made De Ruyter fear that our guards might be in danger, especially at my gate, which opened towards the mountains.

So we made our way back. I found that my guard was indeed hard pressed by a terrible crowd of Maratti. This crowd, however, was so thick that they had no space to use their spears, knives, and guns, or our little party

¹ huts *n.* = small, roughly built houses (made of mud or wood).

would have been destroyed. I formed my men into a line, and we all fired our muskets together, and then ran forward with our spears.

The Maratti fought wildly, but there was no order in their fighting. Many of them fell. None asked for mercy—mercy was something they did not know—but they separated to right and left, and many tried to make their escape over the broken places in the walls. My two parties were united again and we remained masters of the ground.

While this fight was going on, De Ruyter came to our help with a large party of his men. Half of these he left at my gate. ‘We have killed enough now to punish them,’ he said. ‘Let us find where they have put their prisoners, and save them, if it is not too late. I think they may be in that large building in the middle of the town, or in some of the huts near it.’

We save the prisoners

I returned quickly to the centre of the town with a party of men. It was well that I did so. Guided by cries of pain we came upon the prisoners. They were lying on the ground in various huts, tied hand and foot; and Maratti women were cutting at them with their knives.

In the hut which I entered I found an old man, who was clearly an Arab chief, with blood rushing from several wounds. Above him was kneeling a terrible old woman with a great

knife covered with blood. Though his feet and hands were tied and he was dying from loss of blood, the man was attempting to protect a young girl who, also tied, was trying to rise from under him.

I seized the old woman and threw her out of the doorway with such force that she never



‘ I HELPED THE OLD MAN TO SIT UP ’

rose again. Two Arabs were with me, and I commanded one of them to cut the ropes which held the father, while I did the same for the daughter. At the same time I spoke to him in Arabic, saying that we were friends who had come to free them.

The girl moved to her father's side, and covered

Best bed
Hush

his face with kisses and tears. I helped the old man to sit up against a post. He looked at me for a minute. Then he took a ring from one of his fingers with great difficulty, seized my hand, and put the ring on one of my fingers. Then he put the girl's hand into mine, pressed them both together, and in a weak voice said something which I did not understand. His eyes then rested again on his daughter's head, from which they did not move till his body suddenly shook as with fever, and his life passed away.

I was glad to get away for a time from this terrible scene. I placed the two Arabs on guard at the door of the house, and went in search of De Ruyter.

Our men had given up the attack on the Maratti, who, indeed, had all left their town by this time. They were now employed in seizing the valuable goods which the pirates had stolen from any unhappy traders whom they had killed or taken as *slaves*.¹

They found gold rings and money, parcels of silk cloth, and spices, which they carried down to our boats on the shore. They also took a quantity of maize and salted fish, for our stores of food were very low.

This, however, took a long time, for the men were unwilling to leave anything of value.

¹ slave *n.* = unpaid servant who is looked upon as the property of his or her master.

The Frenchmen, too, had found some rum, and many of them were making themselves drunk on it, instead of helping with the work.

De Ruyter was growing very impatient, and with good reason. The noise of our attack had been heard in two or three villages at no great distance away. The people there were either Maratti or friendly towards them—for indeed they did not dare to be unfriendly. The men, on being awakened, had seized their arms, fearing some attack ; and now when they met the escaped pirates from the town they had fearlessly joined them. Thus a large force was being collected to attack us as we returned, heavily loaded, to the boats.

De Ruyter, who thought of everything, had noticed this gathering, and it was for this reason that he had been growing impatient. When I found him, Aston had just arrived. He had been allowed by the French captain to come with two boats which were sent to help us. I told them what had happened to the prisoners. Aston's feelings were almost as deeply moved as mine had been. I told him I had thought it best to leave the chief's daughter alone in her sorrow for a time, but he thought we ought to bring her away at once.

‘ Well,’ said De Ruyter, ‘ you must hurry. There is not a moment to lose. The Maratti and Malagassies will be upon us soon in great force. We must get on board at once.’

‘Come with me, Aston,’ I cried. ‘Help me to get this poor girl on board.’

We found her still crying out to her father, for she could hardly believe that he was quite dead.

‘Come,’ I said, taking her hand, ‘you are free now, and we are your friends. We must leave these cruel Maratti.’

But she refused to leave him. ‘How can we go?’ she cried. ‘I cannot awaken him. He cannot move, and the Maratti will come again and kill him.’

‘Come!’ said Aston, ‘they are calling us. We must go. I cannot bear this. I will carry her to the boats.’

I begged him to do so, for I could not bear to do it myself. It seemed cruel to take her, but it would have been more cruel still to leave her to the mercy of the returning pirates. I told her that I would take care of her father. Then Aston lifted her up in his powerful arms and carried her off in spite of her cries.

Aston reached the boats safely, but he was only just in time. I had rejoined De Ruyter again, and together we had been collecting the Frenchmen who had been drinking rum in the houses. As soon as all the Arab prisoners and Frenchmen were safely out of the town, we started to set fire to some of the houses. We were, however, almost at once called off by the sound of shots.

The pirates, as De Ruyter had expected, had come back with their friends, and had fallen on the Frenchmen who were at last returning to the boats. De Ruyter and I, with the small party of Arabs who remained with us, rushed down to help. The Frenchmen fought bravely, and as some of the sailors who had been guarding the boats also came up with their muskets, the attack was soon beaten off.

Those pirates who had muskets hid behind some rocks on the shore and went on firing from there, but at last all our men were in the boats and we were soon out of their range.

Zela

I did all that I could for the comfort of the Arab chief's daughter. I gave up my own cabin to her, and asked the Rais to find a servant for her from the female prisoners whom we had set free. He said that two women, who had been with her in her father's ship, had already offered to serve her again.

I myself had not been to see her, but I sent the Rais to ask whether there was anything more that she needed. This he did gladly, for he had been told that her father had been the chief of a tribe that he knew. 'I must do the same for her,' he said, 'as I would for my own child.'

Two days later De Ruyter was talking to me on deck. We happened to mention her in our talk, and De Ruyter said,

‘She would make a very good wife for you, my boy. You will marry sooner or later, so why not now? Why do you not take her?’

‘She is beautiful, I know,’ I replied; ‘and she has shown herself to be good and brave. If she loved me as she loved her father, I should be well satisfied. I would rather have her as my wife than any woman I have met. But I have no thought of marrying yet.’

‘Then let me tell you,’ said De Ruyter, ‘that you are already married. You are that girl’s husband.’

De Ruyter had often made fun of me, and I supposed he was doing so now. So I merely smiled and said nothing. But he called the Rais, who was standing near, and said to him:

‘I have been telling this young man of mine that the Arab girl is now lawfully his wife in the most sacred manner according to the customs of your country. Is it not so? Tell him.’

The old Rais then told me that this was certainly true. The two Arabs who had entered the house with me had told him of the chief’s words as he was dying (the words which I had not understood), and how he had joined his daughter’s hand with mine. She herself had admitted it in his presence, he added.

‘He was doing all that he could for his daughter,’ explained De Ruyter. ‘He was putting her under the protection of a strong man, and one who had come to take revenge on his

enemies. Why should he not give her to the man who set her free ? ’

‘ It is true,’ said the Rais, ‘ though I have never before known of an Arab chief giving his daughter to a man of another race.’

‘ It was dark in the house,’ said De Ruyter. ‘ The father thought him an Arab, to be sure. Even in the bright daylight he has the dress, the sunburnt face, and the tall figure of a chief’s son. Even if, as he lay dying, he had noticed that the young man’s Arabic speech was not quite like that of his own country, there would be nothing strange in that. Every trader knows that in other countries he finds Arabs who do not speak as he does.’

‘ Yes,’ replied the Rais, ‘ it is not strange. For my part I believe the boy has Arab blood in him. I never saw any of your western people of his appearance. He is honest and brave, loves our people, uses our customs, and fights as we do. Now that, by the blessing of God, he has an Arab wife, our country must be his own.’

De Ruyter said very seriously that what the Rais had said was true, according to Arab law and custom. ‘ But then,’ he added, ‘ the Arab law is not yours, if you do not wish it.’

‘ What does the girl wish ? ’ I inquired.

‘ As her father married her to you,’ he replied, ‘ she can never marry anyone else.’

Aston afterwards asked me what I intended to do.

‘ Did you not hear ? ’ I said. ‘ It is done already.’

‘ What is done ? ’ he inquired.

‘ I am married,’ I replied.

‘ But she is only a girl,’ he said, ‘ little more than a child ; and you have hardly seen her.’

‘ Well, what Arab does see his wife until after he is married ? ’ I asked.

‘ How can you take her home to England with you ? ’ he enquired. ‘ You don’t intend to pass all your life among Arabs.’

‘ Why not ? ’ I answered. ‘ There is plenty of sunshine in this part of the world. I don’t want to go to England, and I have no home—there or anywhere else.’

Having given her time to get over her sorrow at the loss of her father, I arranged to visit my newly married wife. She was sitting cross-legged on the floor of the cabin when I arrived, dressed all in white. As I entered she rose, took my hand, and put it to her head.

I begged her to sit down, and I myself took a chair near her. Her name, I found, was Zela. I asked her whether I could do anything to add to her comfort on the ship. She thanked me and said that there was nothing more that she needed. Then I told her that I had collected every person of her father’s tribe whom we could find among the prisoners, and that they should be well used and set free.

She thanked me again, and then one of her

women entered, carrying coffee and sweets. Zela rose, took the coffee, and presented it to me. When I had drunk it, she returned the cup to the woman, handed me some sweets, and sat down again.

After that I took from my pocket the gold ring which her father had put on my finger, and handed it to her. She pressed it to her lips, and tears fell from her eyes. Then she took my right hand and put the ring on my first finger.

I then took from my pocket another ring, a much smaller one, which I had chosen from De Ruyter's store. It was of fine gold, with a large and beautiful precious stone in it.

I took her right hand and placed the ring on her first finger. By this giving of rings we had accepted each other as husband and wife, according to the wish of her father. I had not chosen her, she was chosen for me. I had no regrets. In fact I began to think now that if I had searched for a hundred years I could not have chosen better. And every day I grew more of that opinion, and I blessed the old chief whose cruel death had given Zela to me.

CHAPTER VII

VOYAGE TO THE FAR EAST

I command a schooner

WE soon reached Mauritius, and we stayed there happily for some months in a beautiful house that De Ruyter had in the middle of the island. Then De Ruyter went on a short voyage. He left me behind with Aston, but he said that soon after his return he would be setting off on a long voyage, and he promised that I should go with him then.

In five weeks De Ruyter was back in Port Louis, with a beautiful schooner which he had captured.

This schooner was a small American ship that had been captured by an English frigate. About twenty English sailors had been put on board in place of the American crew. Then the schooner had been separated from the frigate by a storm. As the Americans were his friends, and had been sailing under the French flag, De Ruyter attacked and took the schooner while the frigate was some distance away.

He put some of his own men on board his prize, and at night he turned off the course and

hid among some islands until the frigate had passed, and so he got safely away.

De Ruyter, to my great joy, put me in command of the schooner. In a few weeks we had put her in order again, with a new mast and rigging. Aston's four English sailors, and some Americans who had been left sick or wounded on the schooner, begged to be allowed to make the voyage with me. Zela, of course, came on board with me. Nothing could have prevented her.

Aston also came with us. No orders had yet come for his exchange. So De Ruyter was going to set him down at some English port. It was probable that the English had already set free a French officer, but in any case De Ruyter was not willing to leave him with the French in Mauritius.

The first event of our voyage was more amusing than profitable. We met a small French ship, whose captain was employed in bringing fish and fresh *turtle* to Mauritius from a small island where they were very plentiful. Some slaves had been landed on the island to catch and dry the fish for the owners of the ship. Before he could take in his cargo the captain had been surprised by an English frigate. He had escaped, but had been forced to leave his cargo behind.



De Ruyter promised that he would try to

get back the cargo, but said that he should set the slaves free. The captain agreed, for the slaves were not his, and he did not want to lose his cargo of fish and turtle.

De Ruyter told the captain where to wait for him, and we ourselves sailed for the island. In the evening we saw the frigate at anchor in a little bay. The next morning I remained unseen behind an island near the mouth of the bay. De Ruyter's brig, made to look like a slave-ship, sailed as if to enter the bay, but on seeing the frigate she turned about as if to escape.

The frigate, of course, at once set off to follow, as we had expected. I had put two men on the island, and they made signals to me as the frigate moved out. So, unseen by them, I was able to move the schooner round the island, enter the bay, and land a strong party of men.

There we took by surprise a party of English sailors, some guarding the slaves, others cutting wood. We took on board the slaves and as much of the turtle and dried fish as we could in four hours. I dared not stay longer in case the frigate gave up following De Ruyter.

The next day we all met at the place we had arranged. We handed his cargo back to the captain, except some which he asked us to keep for ourselves, in return for our help. We then sailed north to gain the protection of the south-west coast of India against the storms from the north-east which were due at that time.

We fell in with a number of the East India Company's ships under the protection of one of their smaller fighting ships, about as large as De Ruyter's brig. De Ruyter signalled to me that he would deal with the warship while I boarded the others. They were, however, carrying little but food, so I took nothing but some parcels of silk and a few bags of gold money.

I then hurried to help De Ruyter. The other ship seemed to be running away from him round a small island, but almost at once ran on to some rocks. I do not know whether this was due to want of care, or because the captain hoped thus to make her useless for us.

She was, however, not very badly harmed, and in two days we were able to mend her. We took some of her stores and arms, put on board a crew of twenty men, and sent her back as a prize to be sold at Port Louis. About a dozen of her crew were glad to serve with De Ruyter in place of the men we were sending back. The others we set free.

De Ruyter was journeying towards the large island of Borneo in the East Indies, near which he expected in a few weeks to meet the Company's ships from China. He was going to take the brig through the straits of Sunda between the large islands of Sumatra and Java, while I was to go through the Straits of Malacca, between Sumatra and the Malay Peninsula. We arranged a meeting-place and parted.

Adventures at Penang

My object in going through the Straits of Malacca was to set Aston down at the English port of Penang. I left the schooner some miles away, and with eight men in an Arab boat took Aston ashore. I was foolish to go with him, but, having Arab dress, I thought there would be no danger. Then, having arrived at the port, I ought to have said good-bye at once and gone back. But I did not want to leave him, so I went on shore with him to an hotel, where we had a good meal with very good wine.

Afterwards Aston went to visit the English governor of the town to explain who he was and ask what English ships might be expected. As I wanted to give Aston a present on parting, I walked out into the town to look at the shops.

In one of the shops I saw two small gold boxes that I liked. I asked the price. Then taking some gold money from my pocket I gave the shop-keeper nearly as much as he had asked. That was far more than they were worth ; but as I was so free with my money, the shop-keeper took me for a fool, and demanded more. He said that the amount he had mentioned was the price of one box only.

I said, ' That's a lie,' and turned to go.

He then caught hold of me, so I gave him a blow on the head, and he fell back into his shop. He jumped at me with a knife, but I avoided

him, picked up a large metal box, and threw it at his head, so that he again fell to the ground.

A crowd had now gathered behind me, and I could not escape that way, so I jumped into the shop, burst through the back of it, and found myself in a dark narrow passage. There were shouts behind me, but as I ran along no one seemed to be following very closely. I think they had decided that I was a dangerous man, so they preferred to attend to the unhappy shop-keeper.

I got back to the hotel, and made several changes in my dress, so that I should not be known so easily.

I started off to find a way back to my boat some time after darkness had fallen. After making my way through narrow roads and passages, I was passing through a line of huts just outside the town, when a soldier who was on guard called out, '*Halt!*' Who goes there?'

I stopped, and in *Hindustani*² answered, 'A friend.'

He then asked me where I was going, and on what business, saying, 'You can't pass here without a written order.'

'I know that,' I replied. 'I have one.'

I put my hand into a pocket and took out a piece of paper, and advanced towards him, saying, 'Here it is.'

¹ halt *v.* = stop.

² Hindustani *n.* = a language of India.

He told me to stand still, and was about to present his musket, when I sprang at him, covered his mouth with my hand, and threw him to the ground. I held his throat till he could hardly breathe and certainly could not shout. Then I took his musket, ran a hundred yards or more in a new direction, threw it away, and turned again towards the sea.

Suddenly I felt sure that I was being followed. The moon had suddenly shone between some clouds and I saw a shadow moving with mine. I turned quickly and saw a man with a knife in his hand. I raised my left hand and caught the blow in the thick folds of my *cloak*,¹ which I had taken off in order to run. I drew a small pistol from my belt and pointed it at him. It missed fire.

I then drew my knife, but the man, who was, of course, the shop-keeper, turned and ran off. I followed him at once. I dared not let him go, for fear he might call help and prevent my escape. Little by little I gained on him. As we were nearing the river which led to the sea, he turned off by a low building and came to a sudden stop.

In front of him was a deep, narrow canal, into which at high tide boats could be brought to be cleaned and painted. Across this lay, like a fallen mast, the thick trunk of a tree, and the man began very carefully to cross it. I followed

¹ cloak *n.* = a long, loose outer coat, used to keep off rain and wind.

him on to this narrow bridge. Then, finding me almost upon him, he turned round to meet me. In doing this he lost his balance and fell.

It was then low tide, and there could not have been a foot of water anywhere in the canal. He must have fallen deep into the mud and stuck there.

I am sure that he never got out, but I did not wait to see what became of him. I ran down to the shore, and, finding no small boat that I could take, I walked down into the water and swam out to my waiting boat.

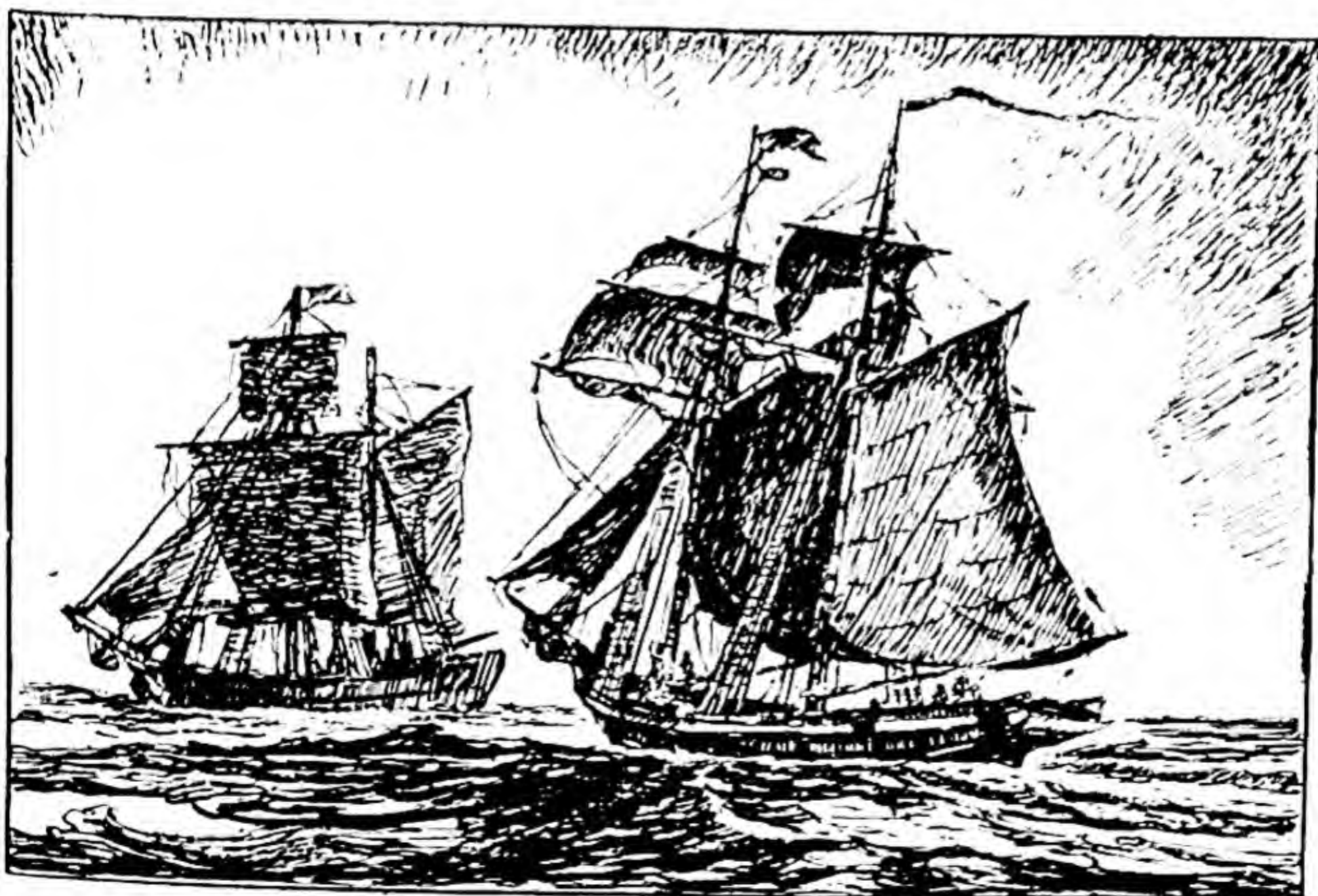
CHAPTER VIII

A STRANGE STORY

Lost at sea

I HAD wasted a good deal of time in going on shore with Aston, and I wanted to be near Borneo in order to meet De Ruyter on the appointed day. So I hurried on as fast as I could and did not stop to board any of the boats or small ships that we sometimes met.

Some days later, however, we met a strange boat. She was of about a hundred tons and was



' WE MET A STRANGE BOAT '

built in a way that I had never seen before. She had two masts ; her ropes were chiefly made of long grass, and some of her sails too. She was being handled so badly that it was difficult to avoid running into her.

The wind had almost dropped, so I signalled to her to stop, and went over in a small boat to examine her. Her crew wore hats made of leaves, but very little other clothing. When I climbed on to her deck a tall, thin man came forward to receive me. He was quite different from his crew. His face and hair were fair, and he wore more clothing.

I was surprised to hear him say to me in my own language, ' You are English, sir, are you not ? '

' Yes,' I replied, ' and who are you ? '

' I am from the island of Zaoo,' he replied.

' Where is that ? ' I asked. ' I have never heard of it.'

He told me that it was to the north-east of Borneo.

' But you are not a native of those islands,' I said.

' No,' he replied, ' I am an Englishman.'

' Then what have you been doing ? ' I asked.

' If you will come into my cabin', he said, ' I will tell you. It is rather a long story.'

' Very well,' I replied. ' The wind has dropped. So I can spare the time.'

I sent my boat back to the schooner to bring

some wine. He gave me some of the tobacco grown on his island, and then started his tale. I will give it in his own words.

* * * *

‘Seven or eight years ago’ (he said), ‘I left England in an East India Company’s ship sailing for China. The first officer came to my father, who was a merchant, to borrow money. He wanted to carry a private cargo to do some trading on his own account. He was already in debt to my father, but my father agreed on certain conditions. These were that he was to take me as a midshipman, so that I should both see the world and learn something of the sea; and that he should hand over to me part of the profit made by his trading.

‘After we had sailed I found that the first officer, being in debt to him, hated my father. So he began to behave very badly towards me. He ordered me to do work that cabin-boys should do, and punished me without cause.

‘The captain lived by himself and would speak to nobody but the first officer and two or three important passengers. So I could not go to him for justice.

‘One night, a little later, when there was a high sea, a man called out that there was a ship coming towards us.

‘“I will report it to the first officer,” I said and went to find him.

‘I found him lying asleep in a comfortable

position, with his cloak round him. Here was my chance of revenge. I left him asleep, went down to the captain's cabin, and told him what the man on watch had reported.

‘ “Where is the officer ? ” he asked.

‘ “I cannot find him, sir,” I replied.

‘ He rushed up on deck. The first thing he saw was my enemy lying asleep. He soon awakened him, but there was no time to waste in words. The wind had now become a storm and waves were breaking over our deck. I could see that a great ship was bearing down right upon us. It seemed that nothing could check or control her.

‘ The captain shouted an order to the man at the helm. It was only just in time. The great ship came on, and struck us, indeed ; but as we had changed our course, it was not with her full force. No very great harm had been done.

‘ The captain did not punish the first officer severely. But the officer soon found out what I had done ; and he made my life worse than ever.

‘ At length we reached the China seas. One night the ship was at anchor near an island, and one of our boats had been lowered into the water. The first officer ordered me to sit in it to see that it was not stolen by the natives.

‘ Suddenly the thought of escape entered my mind. The boat had a mast and a sail, and a barrel of water in it. I had brought down my supper to eat in the boat. I did not think of

food for the following days, or of a map, or of anything else.

‘When it was dark I threw off the rope, let the tide carry me for a short time, then put up my sail, and was soon far away, filled with joy at my escape.

‘The next evening, however, I was not so happy. I was alone in a little boat, on the wide ocean, without a map, and without food. I even wished myself back on the ship again with my enemy, the first officer. I left the helm and allowed the boat to go where it would. At last, tired and hungry, I fell asleep.

‘Shortly before daylight I awoke. I put up my sail and followed the wind. From the direction of the north star I thought that I must be to the north of Borneo, and I saw high land to the south as soon as day broke. I wanted to sail there, but the wind changed and I could not do so.

‘I was sure that sooner or later I should see one of the many islands that were near there. But all that day I saw nothing but the ocean, and I felt that I should die of hunger. It was a clear night, and I continued to sail with a light wind. Suddenly I heard something fall into the boat. With great joy I saw that it was a small fish. I picked it up. Then I remembered that I had no fire to cook it, and not even a knife to cut it. So I threw it down again into the bottom of the boat.

‘ Soon afterwards I saw something dark on the water near me. It looked like a piece of wood, but when I lifted it into the boat I found it was a small turtle.

‘ Long before the morning I was so hungry that I thought no more of cooking or of a knife. I picked up the fish, and began to bite at it, just as it was. It tasted so good that I wondered why people ever wasted time and trouble in cooking fish. I was wise enough to stop when I had eaten half of it, but before many hours had passed I had finished it all.

‘ In the morning I found that I had run past some islands in the darkness, and I could see them miles behind me. But again there was nothing in front of me, and I was too weak to think of trying to work back against the wind.

‘ As the day went on I suffered more and more from hunger. I had the turtle, but how was I to kill it? It had shut itself up safely in its shell. I tried to break the shell against the side of the boat, but I seemed more likely to break the boat. Then I left it alone, and at last it put out its head, which I at once seized and secured with a rope. It was not long before I was making a meal of turtle-meat and eggs.

‘ I had hardly finished my meal when to my great joy I saw a large island in front of me. With a strong wind behind me I went straight on as fast as I could, for the sun was beginning to set. But in my hurry to escape from the sea I

forgot an even greater danger, and let my boat run on to some hidden rocks over which the waves were breaking.

‘ The boat was washed into open water by the next wave, but there she sank, for the rocks had broken several holes in her. I tried to swim, but as soon as I nearly reached a rock to which I might have held, I was washed back by a returning wave. I was thrown so hard against a rock that I was cut all over my body. At last I felt the water closing over my head, and I was so weak that I could do no more.

Life on the island

‘ The next thing that I knew was that I was lying on the ground somewhere, feeling very cold and sick. Some strange people were bending over me, rubbing my body with their hands to bring me back to life. I then saw that they were three young women, and I had been washed into the mouth of a river with sandy shores, near which they had lit a fire.

‘ I found afterwards that they had come down the river in a boat to spear the fish which always came in when there was rough weather at sea. After a time I began to feel hungry again. I told them so by signs, and they all ran away and returned in a few minutes with fruit.

‘ When I had eaten this they helped me into their boat and took it up the river. Trees grew thickly on each side, many of them full

of fruit. At length we came to a place where a large stream ran into the river. They turned into this, tied their boat to the bank, and helped me to get out.

‘ After walking for a short distance we came to some huts built of wood and covered with leaves. Two or three of the largest were close together, and they led me into one of these. There they brought me meat, maize, vegetables and fruit, and I ate a very good meal.

‘ A small crowd of old women and children gathered round, but they were not allowed inside. The only men that I saw were very old. All the other men, I found afterwards, had gone hunting and fishing in various parts of the island with their chief or king. It was their habit twice a year to spend two or three days doing this.

‘ I had fallen amongst the simplest and kindest people in the world. The three girls who had saved me were the chief’s daughters. They made me a comfortable bed of grass, and shared their food with me. When the chief returned he too made me welcome. He gave me his eldest daughter as my wife.

‘ Gradually I learnt their language and their habits. I was able to make many things for him which were very useful. So he loved me very much, and soon afterwards gave me his two other daughters as wives. I have now, as you see, become just like a native of the island.’

‘Where are you going now?’ I asked.

‘As you are English,’ he replied, ‘I will tell you. In the last few years Spanish ships from the Philippine Islands, and Dutch too, have sometimes come to the island, and have seized many of our people as slaves. I am going to India to buy cannon, muskets, and gunpowder, and to ask for the protection of the East India Company.’

‘The guns and powder will be very useful,’ I said. ‘You can trust to them to help you. But the Company will not give you its protection for nothing. You will have to buy it. What can you offer them?’

‘We have some wonderful places where we fish for *pearls*,’¹ he replied. ‘We are the only people that know of them. In exchange for protection we can offer the Company the right to fish for the pearls.’

‘No, no!’ I cried. ‘Do not trust them. Tell nobody where you find your pearls, or the whole island will be taken from you. Collect your pearls in secret, sell them for pistols and swords, and trust only to them for protection.’

He promised that he would follow my advice, and I believe he has done so.

‘But still,’ he said, ‘I must go on to Calcutta, for I wish to send a message to my family that I am alive and happy. I will never return

¹ pearl *n.* = precious stone found in an oyster, a kind of fish which lies on the bed of the sea.

to Europe. I have my wives and children here. I am loved by everyone, and respected as the son of a king. What should I be in England ? ’

‘ Do you think you can get to Calcutta in this funny ship ? ’ I asked. ‘ Where did you get it ? ’

‘ About a year and a half ago,’ he replied, ‘ we were out in our boats going round the island. Near the south coast we saw this boat, with masts broken, being carried by the waves towards the island. We shouted, but nobody replied. So we climbed on board. We found no one alive, but there were several dead bodies, and everything had been taken out of the ship. So we supposed that she had been attacked by pirates.

‘ We pulled her into a little harbour, and I have tried to mend what I could. But I had no iron, rope, paint, or sail-cloth, so what could I do ? You see, our island is so difficult to approach, because of the rocks round it and the dangerous currents, that we have hardly any trade. To buy some of these things with our pearls is one of the reasons for my voyage.’

Night was coming on, so I returned to the schooner. But I promised that we would remain near him, and that in the morning I would bring over some men and try to make his boat easier to manage.

On the next day accordingly I brought my men over, and while they were at work, I smoked

some of his tobacco, and he told me more about the island.

After my men had done what they could for his boat I gave him a map and a compass, and advised him to make his way to Penang, where his vessel could be further improved, so that he could more safely go on to Calcutta.

He was so thankful that he made me take nearly a boat load of tobacco and a small bag of pearls. He had plenty of both, so I accepted them with thanks. We said good-bye, and sailed away on our different courses.

CHAPTER IX

THE CHINA SEAS

A storm

It was almost the day when I was to meet De Ruyter, so we made our way southward down the east coast of Borneo. Just as we were nearing the appointed meeting-place, the wind dropped, and we remained without moving for three days.

Then, one evening, before we could do anything to help ourselves, we were struck by one of those terrible sudden storms that are common in the China Seas. I was sitting on deck with Zela when it started. Thunder began to roll all around us. I ordered the men to stand by on deck, but, almost before anyone could move, the storm was upon us. The upper masts were broken off, and the sails and rigging were carried away by the wind as if they were only paper. The sea became all white with breaking waves, then seemed to lift itself right over the ship.

I seized Zela with one arm, and with the other held on to the ship's side. Had I not done so we should both have been washed away.

When the sea had passed over us I put Zela in a safe place, and looked round for my crew.

Scarcely a man was to be seen. At length, in answer to my calls, some made their way to where I was standing.

‘How many men have we lost?’ I asked.

But before I could get an answer, I heard a voice from the sea, calling, ‘Oh, Captain!’

I knew the voice. It was that of one of my best sailors. One of our small boats, being protected by the side of the ship, had not been carried away. The sudden storm had now spent itself, but great waves were still rising and falling, throwing the ship about as if she were a child’s ball.

Rushing to the boat I called for men to help me to save their friends. At first nobody answered, for they hardly knew whether they themselves had been saved. Then I called some of the Englishmen by name. They came at once, and with great difficulty we got the boat over.

I took only four men and we pushed off. We soon found two men who were holding on to pieces of wood. We searched for others, but could find none. At last, in danger of losing the schooner, we had to return.

With great labour we got the boat back to the ship, for the seas seemed almost as heavy as ever. Then, just as we had arrived, a great wave lifted up the boat against the side of the ship, turned it over, and we were all in the sea.

The schooner was being rapidly carried by

the wind and sea farther away from us. We were all tired out by our efforts in the boat, so that swimming would have been hard enough even in a smooth sea. I thought we were lost, for I knew that no other boat could be got out.

‘A rope,’ I cried, ‘a rope, or we shall be lost.’

At first nothing seemed to happen. Then I saw something white moving on the schooner. I heard a well-known voice through the noise of the waves. ‘Here, a rope!’

The end of a small white rope fell into the water only a yard away. I seized it. Four of the other men were near me, and they too got hold of it. It was only a thin rope, but it held us until the men, directed by Zela, had thrown us other ropes. The other two men we never saw again.

By morning the weather was fine again, and we were able to continue on our course. Our progress, however, was very slow, for most of our sails and the upper parts of our masts had been lost. The winds, too, were very light. This, perhaps, was a good thing, for, broken as we were, we could hardly have lived through another storm. I think we should have considered ourselves safer in the strange vessel which we had mended for the Zao prince on his way to India.

Four days later we sailed slowly into the port where De Ruyter was waiting for us. He hurried on board, wanting to know what had happened

to us. I took him down to the cabin and told him our story.

‘Well!’ he said. ‘It cannot be helped. You have had a wonderful escape. We must do what we can to put the schooner right again. I have rope and sail-cloth, and I think that on shore we shall be able to find trees which we can use for masts.’

‘I myself have been lucky. I met one of the Company’s fighting ships, attacked her and shot down her masts, and then took two of the trading ships which she was protecting.’

‘After that I was able to help these people here. As I was approaching I saw a large number of Malayan boats. When they saw me coming they pulled in towards the shore of an island nearby. Believing them to be pirates I followed. Their crews all jumped out and swam to shore. I found that they were, indeed, Malayan pirates who had taken away about two hundred prisoners from this tribe.’

‘The people are now so thankful that they will do anything they can for me. Every day they bring us fruit, fish, goats, and chickens.’

A tiger hunt

De Ruyter, I found, was also very friendly with a Malay chief, whose tribe lived some distance along the coast.

This chief loved sport as much as we did, and offered to take us to a place where we should

find *tigers*. The schooner was not yet ready for sea, and it was still too early to expect the ships from China, so De Ruyter was glad to give his men something to do.



The chief provided us with elephants, for we had a journey of two or three days through thick forest. Generally these powerful, thick-skinned animals have no fear of other animals, but the elephants which we took had never seen tigers before, so we did not know how they would behave.

When we arrived at the place, De Ruyter went out to examine the ground. He came back and told us that he had found the tracks of three tigers leading to some thick forest, near which he had found the remains of a deer that they had killed.

Early the next morning we placed our twenty sailors and the Malays all round this forest and gave the order for them to advance. Soon a tiger was driven out and sprang at us. De Ruyter and I fired together. What the result was I do not know, for both our elephants turned and ran away, wild with fear. I was thrown off by the branch of a tree, and De Ruyter was too.

De Ruyter believed there were other tigers in the forest, so we collected some of our sailors and again advanced in a ring. We soon heard *growls*,¹ and De Ruyter said, 'Watch ! there is a

¹ growl *n.* = deep sound made by an angry animal.

tigress with her *cubs*.¹ Don't fire till she breaks out.'

A cub of two years or more came out, but then took cover under a thick *bush*,² followed by two others. De Ruyter and I did not fire, expecting the tigress to follow, but one of the sailors shot at a cub. This brought out the angry tigress.



'SOON A TIGER WAS DRIVEN OUT AND SPRANG AT US'

She rushed at us. I fired both barrels, and we went back a few yards.

The wounded tigress took a few steps forward and was just preparing to spring, when De Ruyter, who had not yet fired, shot her dead.

¹ cub *n.* = young of wild animals, such as tigers, lions, bears.

² bush *n.* = low, woody tree with many branches and leaves.

While I was loading my gun again, a wounded cub, almost fully grown, sprang at me and knocked me down ; but De Ruyter was only a yard away, and coolly shot it in the head with the other barrel of his gun.

The sailors were now firing at the other cubs, and as bullets were flying on all sides we quickly stood aside.

Zela had come with us to the entrance of the wood, and I had left her there on her elephant, with a guard of four Arabs. I now decided to go back to her to make sure that she was safe. As I drew near I heard the growl of a tiger, and a cry. I rushed out into the open space, and saw a great tiger trying to hang on to the elephant's head. The elephant succeeded in shaking him off ; but on the ground under the tiger was a small figure in a white cotton dress.

There was no room for fear in my mind. I could think only of Zela under that tiger's terrible paw. My gun was not loaded, so I threw it away, and drew my long knife. Armed only with this I rushed forward. Then for the first time the tiger saw me. Forgetting the elephant, he drew his shoulders back to spring at me. But the elephant quickly turned, and with a kick of his great foot rolled the tiger over, and before he could gain his feet again I had buried my knife in his body.

The tiger, however, was still able to strike me down with a blow of his paw, and a cub then

attacked me too. I should have been torn to pieces in a minute, but luckily the Malay chief ran up, buried his spear into the body of the cub, and finished the tiger with his knife.

Helping me up from beneath the cub's body, he said, 'This is good sport. There are still several more in the forest. Come along !' And away he went.

The next moment I felt Zela throw herself into my arms, crying with joy.

'Who is that, then ?' I asked, pointing to the small, white-covered figure on the ground.

'That is the elephant's poor driver,' she replied.

'I thought that it was you,' was all that I could say, for I had nearly gone mad with fear for her.

CHAPTER X

THE END

DE RUYTER, on account of a great storm, got nothing out of the ships from China. So he decided to stay longer in the East Indies. Amongst others we visited the strangely-shaped island of Celebes, to the east of Borneo. In one of its bays we got great quantities of fish ; but here Zela had a serious accident, which was to have a still sadder result.

I had put up a little tent for Zela on the shore, and I myself with an Arab climbed to some high ground to look down on the bay.

While I was climbing, Zela and the Malay girl, named Adoo, who attended her, decided to go swimming in the bay. They swam towards the rocks at one side of the bay. Adoo reached them first and at once climbed up, though not without difficulty, for the lower rocks were smooth and wet.

Zela remained for a time swimming about below. Suddenly the other girl saw some *sharks*¹ and shouted to Zela. Zela was near the rocks and reached them in a few seconds, and began

¹ shark *n.* = large man-eating fish.

climbing up. Adoo bent down to help her to the top, but before she had reached it they both slipped and fell to the bottom.

I knew nothing of all this until I had walked back to the tent. I was struck with great fear on seeing drops of blood leading up to it from the sea.

Expecting to see her dead I burst into the tent. Her stillness, her closed eyes, and the paleness of her face, at first made her look as if she were dead. But then she moved a little, and cried out. She was in great pain, but she was alive.

I then began to attend to her wounds, tearing up my shirt to cover them. I soon found, however, that not only was she cut deeply in several parts of her body, but her head also was seriously hurt, so that she hardly knew what was happening. And she was very weak from loss of blood.

We remained in the tent that night, as it was already late, and the sea was running high outside the little bay. The next morning we got her to the schooner, and De Ruyter sent the doctor across from the brig to attend to her.

All that day and the next she suffered great pain, and she could not sleep even at night. But on the third day to my great joy she fell asleep and the doctor told me that her danger was past.

We then started on our long voyage back to

Mauritius. Week after week passed, but Zela gained very little strength. I feared that all was not well with her, but the doctor said that all she needed was time and care.

A few days before we were expecting to arrive at Mauritius I was sleeping on deck one night, when I was awakened by Adoo, Zela's servant. I ran to the cabin and found Zela in great pain. As soon as I could I got the doctor over from the brig, but one look at his face told me that even he could do nothing to save her.

I never left her till the end. She was only happy when lying in my arms. The next night she heard a voice on the deck calling out that Mauritius was in sight. 'I am glad,' she cried. 'Take me in your arms and carry me on shore. I am too weak to walk.'

She put her arms round my neck, and saying 'Now I am well and happy !' she lay back, and her spirit passed away.

De Ruyter's end

There is little more to say.

De Ruyter and the Governor had received news that the East India Company was fitting out a large force of ships to seize the island of Mauritius. So De Ruyter was to sail at once for France with messages to the Emperor, and he asked me to go with him. I had once thought never to see Europe again, but now the East had nothing for me if Zela was not in it.

De Ruyter was the only friend I now had to comfort me. What could I do but follow him?

I was glad to have work to keep me busy, and I had the schooner ready for sea again in three days. The brig was sold, and all our followers well paid. Then we set off on our voyage to France.

The Emperor received De Ruyter and the messages he carried. De Ruyter explained how useful Mauritius could be to the French in cutting off English ships passing between India and Europe, but the Emperor would do nothing to save it. 'The French nation,' he said, 'is of no use on the sea; I want men in my armies, not on the sea.'

The Emperor had offered to give De Ruyter employment, so for the sake of my health he arranged for me to go to England for a few months. 'At the end of that time I will return,' he said, 'or, if I am prevented, you can join me in America or elsewhere.'

When the moment of our parting arrived De Ruyter's face was almost as pale as mine. He said in a low voice, 'Farewell, my dear boy.' Then he made an effort to speak more cheerfully, and added, 'In six months we meet again.'

But I felt that we should never meet again.

De Ruyter was on a small French warship, on a secret journey to Africa for the Emperor. They were caught by an English frigate, which

opened fire on them. The rope which held up the flag was cut in two by a shot. De Ruyter and the captain were about to pull it up again, when they were both shot down ; and De Ruyter's body was found folded in the flag under which he had so often fought and won.

